

THE NORTH AMERICAN FILIPINO STAR

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Liberal leadership candidates reveal their policy platforms as election day nears

As Canada has been plagued with urgent economic and political issues, the five confirmed candidates for the Liberal Party leadership have gradually revealed what they would do if elected to the leadership position and what they would do if elected as prime minister.

Frank Baylis

Out of the five candidates, only Frank Baylis has so far responded to the call for a town hall meeting via zoom organized by the United Against Hate Canada headed by Marvin Rotrand, Director General, which was held on February 13. Rotrand has offered all the candidates the same opportunity to speak to an audience that is open to everybody who wants to hear what a candidate has to say. There were several speakers during the zoom meeting who endorsed Frank Baylis as they had worked with him for many years.

The first person to declare an intention to replace Trudeau, Montreal business leader Frank Baylis said his campaign is focused on three pillars: affordability, health care and modernizing government. He would like Canada to have the best health care system in the world.

The former MP suggests boosting the economy by investing in Canadian universities, businesses and incubators and decreasing government debt.



Left-to-right Mark Carney, Chrystia Freeland, Karina Gould and bottom left-to-right, Frank Baylis and Ruby Dhalla. (Amber Bracken/Reuters, Justin Tang/The Canadian Press, Patrick Doyle/The Canadian Press, Frank Baylis/LinkedIn, rubyforpm.ca) - Latest update - Feb. 24th - Dr. Dhalla was not approved by the Liberal Party election committee due to violations of the rules. Debate of four candidates set for Feb. 24th & 25th in Mtl.

Last week, he held a news conference in Ottawa where he presented a three-point government reform plan, which would limit terms for senators and MPs to 10 years, create a second chamber for debate in the House of Commons and redistribute power to MPs rather than party leaders. He has also called for Canada to recognize Palestinian

statehood and to invest in rebuilding efforts in Gaza.

When asked by Marvin Rotrand during the zoom town hall meeting what he would do if he does not win, he replied that he would be ready to do what needs to be done if he would be asked to help the country in areas where he can apply his business management experience

and professional ability as an engineer.

Mark Carney

Marc Carney has received a lot of media attention and endorsements by several cabinet members of the current Liberal government. The former central banker of both Canada and UK has

See Page 4 Liberal Party leadership

Pierre Poilievre hosts "Canada First" Rally on National Flag Day



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre speaks at his 'Canada First' rally in Ottawa on Saturday, as U.S. President Donald Trump's threats fuel a surge in patriotism among Canadians. (Justin Tang/The Canadian Press)

Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025 - The Ottawa convention center had an overflow of a thousand people who joined the "Canada First" Rally hosted

by Pierre Poilievre, Conservative Party leader who delivered a speech which had a different tone from previous ones

See Page 9 Canada First Rally

Montreal demonstrators rally against Amazon's closures in QC



People take part in a protest in Montreal, Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025, against Amazon's decision to shutter its seven warehouses in Quebec, including what was Canada's only unionized Amazon facility. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Graham Hughes. See story on page 17

OPINION EDITORIAL

By: Gus Mercado

Who's afraid of a Trump dictatorship?



The idea of a "Trump dictatorship" is a significant concern in U.S. political discourse, eliciting various reactions from different groups.

Liberals and progressives, alarmed by Trump's perceived dismissal of democratic norms and civil liberties, fear the erosion of democratic integrity and potential scapegoating of marginalized communities.

Moderates and centrist Republicans share unease over Trump's governance, struggling with party loyalty while valuing democratic principles and the need for unity over divisive politics.

International observers and human rights advocates worry about Trump's impact beyond U.S. borders, concerned about weakened global alliances and threats to democracy. Minority communities, including racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and women, feel particularly vulnerable due to Trump's rhetoric, heightening their urgency to protect their rights.

Counterpoints to a Potential Shift to Dictatorship in the U.S.

While concerned Americans are gnashing their teeth in fear of a Trump dictatorship, there are also voices of calm and optimism that are surfacing, some of them from unlikely sources. A brilliant and pragmatic Chinese immigrant, Miss Li Nanxi who was born in Hangzhou and who lived most of her life under an iron-fisted Chinese authoritarian regime, came to the U.S. to study at the University of Southern California and since then has embraced American democracy and way of life. She came up with the following 7 counterpoints to allay our fears of a Trump dictatorship.

She says even if President-elect Donald Trump controls the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Supreme Court, the United States will not necessarily fall into dictatorship for the following reasons:

1. Checks and balances. The American political system is based on checks and balances. Even if a president has strong influence, there are other institutions in the Federalized system of government such as the state and local governments, the decentralized judiciaries, and the

national local media that can still restrict his power. About half of the state governments are currently run by Democrat governors including most of the largest states. And at least 50% of the population are Democrats. And the military, whose leaders are sworn to the Constitution and not to political leaders, is politically neutral. A free media, even with new restrictions and attempts to monopolize the industry, can still sway a very fickle electorate. All of these powerful forces combined will make it very difficult for the country to move to a dictatorship form of government.

2. Public opinion in a democratic system. Public opinion and the reaction of voters are very important. If Trump's policies are proven to be harmful and become widely opposed, the situation may trigger massive protests and opposition movements, which will affect his ability to govern. Collective adverse reaction from local governments and the people is powerful and can deter any budding move towards authoritarianism. The very foundation of this great nation lies in the importance and power of the people. This concept has been deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of Americans for more than 200 years and will not change overnight as a result of one election and the resurgence of an aspiring tyrant.

3. Freedom of media and speech. Free media and free speech are the essential pillars of democracy. Powerful media objections and public opposition can effectively restrict the abuse of power. If Trump tries to move towards dictatorship, his administration will face intense pressure from public opinion, supported by negative reactions from the international community which an aspiring tyrant will have difficulty fending off.

4. Electoral system. The US electoral system allows for regular elections, ensuring that citizens will have the opportunity to express their opinions and change leaders every four years, barring a Constitution overhaul which is unlikely. Therefore, even if an administration adopts a more centralized form of governing and becomes unpopular with the volatile electorate, it can be replaced in

the next election.

5. Social movements. The fiber of the American psyche has always been averse to communism and dictatorship. It views America as the beacon of freedom and democracy, Ronald Reagan's "shining city on a hill." Massive social movements and activism among non-governmental organizations have played an important role in American history. The vigilance of civil society can force the government to be more transparent and accountable, exposing threats to America's role as the beacon of democracy in the world.

6. Dictatorships rise and fall. Dictatorships inevitably end, sometimes in a bloodless uprising of the people as what happened in the Philippines some decades back, or violently and swiftly as recently witnessed in Syria.

7. International influence. Last but certainly not the least factor that will not make it easy for an aspiring dictator to be successful is the international community which will not favor and will not support a dictatorial government in the United States. As the biggest and most powerful superpower in the world, the United States is far ahead of other nations in the economic, military and technology spheres. The U.S. under a dictatorship regime could cause major global conflicts in our international economic and military alliances and treaties that could have devastating consequences. The international community, whether allies or adversaries would prefer the status quo in the U.S. system of government.

Conclusion: Overall, fears of a Trump dictatorship stem from a complex mix of long standing ideological beliefs and experiences that have been threatened by open declarations from President Donald Trump that he will govern as a dictator on Day 1, as well as the not-too-secret 900-page Project 2025 governing blueprint of the Republican party which points to many tenets of authoritarian rule.

Fortunately, there are many



President Trump announced his plan for Gaza during a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Tuesday, Feb. 4 Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

The proposal for a US takeover of Gaza would disrupt almost every foreign policy objective the new US administration has in the Middle East.

With Trump's plan announced, Netanyahu can pitch himself to his far right devotees as the only Israeli political figure who can get the US president to make their vision for the Middle East a reality.

That vision, to bury peace with Palestinians once and for all, is boosted by Trump's Gaza plan. Instead of removing illegal

arguments and counterpoints that give assurances that a sudden shift to dictatorial system of government is still far-fetched at this time. Nonetheless, freedom-loving individuals and communities must unite to confront these challenges proactively and as quickly as possible. It becomes increasingly imperative to foster active dialogue and cooperation among Americans of all ages, concerned communities of nations, state and local governments and groups, NGOs and the powerful free media to uphold the democratic values that have defined American society for almost 250 years.

About the Author:



Gus Mercado is a well-known civic and business leader in Dallas, Texas. He came to the U.S. as a political refugee to escape a dictatorial regime that he opposed in the Philippines. While working in managerial and executive positions for several Fortune 100 companies, he became very active in welcoming new immigrants to this country who were seeking refuge from political persecution, notably from Asian countries. He has also been in the forefront of providing rapid response to victims of natural disasters in his home region in Asia. He is now Chairman/CEO of DATALOGIX, a minority firm that provides engineering services to big telecom networks.#

Israeli settlers to pave the way to a Palestinian state, displacing Palestinians from Gaza would put an end to Palestinian statehood – an objective Netanyahu doesn't care to hide.

A US takeover of Palestinian land would renew the legitimacy of Iran's proxies across the region, if not trigger a regional war.

Excerpts from article "Negotiating tactic or not, Trump's Gaza plan has already done irreparable damage" By Ahmed Aboudouh, The Chatham House, published Feb. 7, 2025.#



FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

A view of the Canadian economy in 2025

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

With all the headline news almost everyday about Donald Trump's tariff threats and his rhetoric about making Canada the 51st state, it maybe a worthwhile exercise to learn about the Canadian economy and how it stands with the rest of the world. Perhaps, this will allay some of our fears that we are not about to lose our sovereignty and that we will still be able to cope with all the challenges that come our way.

According to the World Bank data, Canada is one of the biggest economies in the world. In fact, it is in the 9th position among the advanced economies (see Global Outlook projections chart) but it is highly dependent on international trade with exports and imports of goods and services each comprising about one-third of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) which is the most common measure for the size of an economy that measures the value of total final output of goods and services produced in a specific period of time.

Although we have a lot to be grateful for as we live in one of the best countries in the world, we have to be aware of significant challenges facing the Canadian economy - from housing prices to inflation, but one critical and lesser-known problem is the declining growth in labor productivity according to a recent study (see labor productivity chart showing the downward trend). If this issue is not addressed, productivity regression threatens to hinder economic growth and diminish living standards across the country.

Labor productivity is important because it is one of the best indicators for forecasting future economic performance. A higher labor productivity rate means that the workforce produces greater output with fewer resources, which enhances competitiveness and economic growth and, in the long term, results in higher wages and improved living standards. Conversely, low productivity leads to slow wage growth, diminished economic expansion, and challenges in controlling inflation through monetary policy.

The International Labor Organization ranks countries by labor productivity levels. The United States is ranked 13th, and Canada is ranked 26th, tied with Spain and Hong Kong. The United States maintained high productivity in the pandemic's aftermath, a phenomenon that remains somewhat of a mystery to policymakers.

The substantial integration between US and Canadian economies means that lagging Canadian economic productivity will have a direct impact on the United States. If this issue worsens, it could negatively affect sectors reliant on cross-border trade and investment.

Addressing Canada's productivity lag demands comprehensive strategies. Economists advocate for the public sector to redact interprovincial trade barriers, streamline regulations to eliminate inefficiencies, and implement tax reforms to incentivize domestic investment. The public and private

World Economic Outlook Growth Projections

(Real GDP, annual percent change)	ESTIMATE	PROJECTIONS	
	2024	2025	2026
World Output	3.2	3.3	3.3
Advanced Economies	1.7	1.9	1.8
United States	2.8	2.7	2.1
Euro Area	0.8	1.0	1.4
Germany	-0.2	0.3	1.1
France	1.1	0.8	1.1
Italy	0.6	0.7	0.9
Spain	3.1	2.3	1.8
Japan	-0.2	1.1	0.8
United Kingdom	0.9	1.6	1.5
Canada	1.3	2.0	2.0
Other Advanced Economies	2.0	2.1	2.3



sector prioritizing innovation in AI and critical industries as well as capitalizing on Canada's highly educated workforce and abundant natural resources offer further avenues for productivity growth. However, the impact of these policies on businesses and workers will vary; the benefits will only be felt throughout the economy if they are equitably shared with workers.

Additionally, Canada can look to other countries for solutions, such as Australia, which in recent years has boosted their productivity levels, through a government-led productivity commission to provide frameworks for policy reform.

To improve the Canadian

economy in 2025, key strategies include: fostering innovation in key sectors, increasing skilled immigration to address labor shortages, modernizing regulations, prioritizing major infrastructure projects, streamlining the tax system, promoting small business growth, and strategically diversifying export markets to reduce reliance on commodities.

Canada's economic prospects will brighten but not without challenges. Needless to say, we will need a leader with the foresight and vision to guide the country to overcome them.#

With files from various articles on the economy.



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From Page 1 Liberal Party leadership spent the first half of the race fanning across the country, promising to bring a centrist focus on the economy if he's successful in replacing Trudeau.

Since launching his campaign, Carney has dropped hints about the policies he'd bring in. But so far he still has to provide more details.

During a news conference last week, he said he would cut middle-class taxes, scrap the Trudeau government's capital gains tax increase, up defence spending to hit the NATO target by 2030 and "boost" the incomes of young Canadians.

He also said a Carney-led government would cut the red tape on building projects and address provincial trade barriers. On Thursday, the former Bank of Canada governor suggested he would get new homes built and lower building costs, "by including steps to promote innovation and increase productivity in the construction industry."

How all those new programs would work is still unclear. Carney's campaign has so far provided few details, including how much they would cost.

Earlier this week, Carney was asked why he has not released more concrete policy details. Carney rejected the premise of the question.

"I've spent a substantial portion of my life in policy," he said.

"What I'm saying out here in ways that Canadians can understand and relate to their day-to-day life is all backed up by detailed policies. [There's a] time and place to reveal all of that."

His website currently has just one policy heading: climate.

Carney, once a vocal proponent of carbon pricing, has said he would replace his party's consumer carbon tax with an incentive program that he promises will reward Canadians for making green choices. He has vowed to keep the output-based pricing system levied on large industrial emitters.

When it comes to responding to Trump, Carney has popped up on international platforms — The Daily Show, CNN and BBC Newsnight — to underscore that Canada will stand up to Trump.

If Trump follows through on his tariff threat, Carney has said he supports dollar-for-dollar retaliatory tariffs. In the longer term he has repeatedly pushed the need for Canada to attract investment, diversify trade and ease internal trade barriers in the face of an increasingly protectionist White House.

According to a recent poll, what he's saying appears to be resonating.

A recent Leger survey suggests that if Carney wins the Liberal leadership race, he would erase the massive lead the Conservatives have enjoyed for the past year and a half.

The same survey suggests support for a Liberal Party led by Chrystia Freeland would slide three points to 28 per cent, with Conservatives at 39 per cent.

(The online poll reached 1,590 adults between Feb. 7 and Feb. 10. The polling industry's professional body, the Canadian Research Insights Council, says online surveys cannot be assigned a margin of error because they do not randomly sample the population.)

Chrystia Freeland

Chrystia Freeland the candidate has spent the first half of the race distancing herself from Chrystia Freeland the former finance minister.

Out of the gate she promised policy shifts that put her at odds with the government she once held a key role in, including scrapping the carbon tax — the Trudeau government's marquee environmental policy — and abandoning changes to the capital gains tax.

Freeland — who led Canada's response to Trump during his first term — has angled herself to voters as a tested negotiator to take on the president during his second term.

This week she renewed her calls for Canada to take a more aggressive stance to deal with the U.S. administration, including dollar-for-dollar retaliation on any tariffs and 100 per cent tariffs on Teslas, the electric vehicles made by key Trump adviser Elon Musk.

In an op-ed in the New York Times, she suggested a retaliation list should be published "immediately to allow for maximum pressure on the administration from the American industries and workers we will target." She also spoke to CNN this week.

Since resigning from Trudeau's cabinet in December, Freeland has pitched herself as someone who would have a steadier hand on the economy than her former boss.

In her searing resignation letter in December, she took aim at what she called Trudeau's "costly political gimmicks."

Earlier this week, she rolled out a suite of proposals aimed at improving the cost of living for Canadians, including an income tax cut for millions of people and policies she says will lower the price of groceries and reduce credit card debt.

On Thursday, she proposed a plan she said would entice Canadian doctors and nurses practising in the U.S. to head north. Her campaign says if Trump moves ahead with his tariff threats, she will offer doctors \$200,000 and nurses \$100,000 to return home to Canada and pay off a portion of their U.S. student loans.

Last week, she unveiled a 10-point economic growth plan that promised to eliminate trade barriers on agriculture, transportation and alcohol, leveraging federal transfers to do so. Her plan also calls to fast-track at least 10 major projects a year and enhance tax incentives for those in the critical minerals sector.

When it comes to defence, she said she would meet the NATO spending target of two per cent of gross domestic product by 2027 — five years ahead of the federal government's stated plan.

Most of Freeland's policy announcements have been made

through written statements with no news conferences, meaning reporters haven't been able to ask questions.

Her campaign did not respond to a CBC News request for the costing of all her policy proposals.

Karina Gould

Former government House leader Karina Gould has been one of the most active campaigners when it comes to rolling out policies and doing interviews with Canadian media.

The 37-year-old has presented herself as a younger, "fresh" voice for the party, who listens to the grassroots.

"We have to be honest about the fact that Canadians have lost trust in our party," Gould said last month after officially entering the race.

On Thursday, she promised to widen the eligibility for Canada's employment insurance system and introduce a universal basic income program.

When it comes to addressing Canadians' affordability concerns, an area the Liberal government is widely seen to have struggled with, she has said she would temporarily cut the federal sales tax on goods and services to four per cent for one year.

She's also promising to lift the GST on children's clothing, diapers, strollers and car seats permanently.

When it comes to housing, Gould said she would offer interest-free loans to first-time homebuyers worth up to 50 per cent of the home's purchase price. Previous iterations of the program had limited the loans to about 10 per cent.

Other policy promises include:

- Pausing the increases on the consumer carbon tax.
- Permanently increasing the corporate tax rate — from 15 per cent to 17 per

Government of Canada launches Pre-budget consultations to hear from Canadians

News release

February 14, 2025 - Ottawa, Ontario - Department of Finance Canada

The Government of Canada is inviting Canadians to participate in pre-budget consultations to help shape Budget 2025.

Through Budget 2025, the government will remain focused on responding to the current Canada-U.S. context, making life more affordable for all Canadians, continuing to strengthen economic security, and unlocking growth by boosting our competitiveness and productivity.

Starting today until March 10, 2025, Canadians can share their ideas for further government action in defence of Canada's interests, as well as their priorities on how to strengthen our economy, at Canada.ca/your-budget.

Quotes

"Consulting Canadians is not only about shaping an effective and successful budget — it's about creating a budget that reflects the priorities of the people it serves. While we continue to stand up for Canadian consumers, jobs, and businesses, we want to hear from you on the issues and priorities that matter most. This is your budget, and we are eager to hear your ideas."

cent — on companies that make more than \$500 million per year in profits.

• Exempting supply management from any future trade negotiations.

• Bolstering the powers of the Competition Bureau to better investigate reports of price gouging and over-pricing

Ruby Dhalla

Former MP for Brampton-Springdale, Ruby Dhalla, has returned to politics after losing her seat in the 2011 federal election and says she's 'here to save Canada.' She tells Power & Politics that she has what the other leadership hopefuls don't.

Dhalla is billing herself as the true outsider in the race, is running to the right of her opponents.

The Paul Martin-era Liberal MP has kept most of her campaign so far online, posting her policy planks on social media.

Among them are promises to deport illegal immigrants and impose life sentences for possession of hard drugs. Dhalla has also called for an economic czar to identify waste and overspending and a new health czar to review the health-care system.

(News update: Feb. 22nd, Dhalla has not been permitted to run due to violations of the Liberal Party election rules).

What's next in the race?

The candidates need to pay the final instalment of the \$350,000 entry fee on Monday, Feb. 17. With \$125,000 due, it could see some candidates wiped off the ballot if they can't meet the fundraising goal.

The party will hold its official French and English debates on Feb. 24 and 25 in Montreal.

With files from CTV News, CBC News



– The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs

Study another language at Gilmore College International





Monthly News

By John Leo Lete
Local Journalism Initiative
National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada

West Island Mission Brings Essential Aid to DDO Residents

Dollard-des-Ormeaux, QC – In the heart of the West Island, a vital organization is making a difference in the lives of hundreds of families struggling to make ends meet. The West Island Mission, which recently expanded into Dollard-des-Ormeaux (DDO), is committed to providing food assistance with dignity, ensuring that those in need can shop for their essentials rather than simply receiving pre-packed food boxes.

one goes hungry. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate financial need by providing proof of income and residency, ensuring that resources are directed to those who require them most.

Humble Beginnings and a Mission to Grow

Founded in 2005 as a grassroots initiative, West Island Mission began as a small-scale food delivery service operated out of private



Community support in action – Volunteers at a local food bank working together to make a difference. (From left to right) Sandra Watson, Reintegration Specialist/Mental Health Support; Judith Fyfe, Assistant Director; Jack Jones, Assistant Operations Manager; and Suzanne Scarrow, Executive Director.

Unlike traditional food banks, West Island Mission operates on a unique color-coded system that allows individuals and families to select items based on their household size. With categories ranging from single individuals to large families, the initiative ensures that clients receive the appropriate quantity of food items. Every visit costs a nominal fee of \$5, yet families leave with food valued between \$100 and \$200.

A Growing Demand for Support

The need for food assistance has surged significantly, especially since the start of the year. The organization, which was aiding approximately 350 families during the Christmas season, now serves over 430 families. Notably, single-income households and seniors on fixed incomes comprise a substantial portion of those seeking help. The rising cost of rent, medication, and daily necessities has made it increasingly difficult for many to stay afloat.

Immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, are also welcomed by West Island Mission. While some newcomers face waiting periods for social services, the organization steps in to provide immediate assistance, ensuring that no

homes and vehicles. Over the years, it transitioned into a client-choice shopping model, recognizing that individuals prefer selecting their own groceries.

The organization's recent expansion into a bigger facility has significantly increased its ability to store and distribute food supplies.

Funding and Challenges

Despite its success, West Island Mission faces ongoing challenges, particularly in securing consistent funding. Unlike government-funded programs, the organization relies on grants, corporate partnerships, and individual donations. Major corporate supporters such as Brother, Pfizer, and Medtronic contribute both financially and through volunteerism. However, sustaining operations, especially in the face of increasing rental costs, remains a pressing concern.

One of the hardest sacrifices has been the organization's inability to continue purchasing milk and eggs, a staple it previously provided. With rent costs now four times higher than in previous locations, West Island Mission is working tirelessly to find new funding sources that will allow it to continue providing comprehensive assistance.

Support from the City and Future Initiatives

While the city of DDO has welcomed West Island Mission, financial support from the municipality is still pending. Other local governments, such as Pierrefonds-Roxboro, Pointe-Claire, and Kirkland, have contributed, and the organization remains hopeful that DDO will follow suit.

Looking ahead, the organization is preparing for its next major initiative, "Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation," which aims to address food insecurity during the summer months.

With children out of school, many families lose access to school meal programs, making summer one of the most challenging times for low-income households. West Island Mission is dedicated to ensuring its shelves remain stocked to meet this

Make March Break Memorable with These Activities in Pierrefonds-Roxboro

March Break is fast approaching, and Pierrefonds-Roxboro offers a plethora of activities to ensure families create lasting memories. Whether you're seeking outdoor adventures, cultural experiences, or educational workshops, there's something for everyone. Here's a curated list of activities to make your March Break unforgettable:

1. **YMCA Spring Break Camp**
Enroll your child in the YMCA Spring Break Camp at the Centre communautaire de l'Ouest in Grier Park. From March 3 to March 7, children aged 5 to 12 can enjoy cooperative games, sports, arts & crafts, and outdoor activities. Registration is required.

2. **Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth**
with Maple Taffy at the Library

growing seasonal demand.

A Message of Hope

For those in need, West Island Mission encourages individuals to seek help. Newcomers and low-income residents can contact 211 for information on available services or reach out directly to the organization. Reintegration specialist Sandra Watson plays a key role in guiding new arrivals and ensuring they have the tools necessary to succeed in their new community.

As the demand for food assistance continues to grow, West Island Mission remains steadfast in its commitment to providing essential support, fostering a compassionate and resilient community where no one is left behind.

kids and teens. Explore robotics with LEGO® WeDo 2.0 and Spike, unleash creativity with STEAM activities, or dive into the world of DNA with the Genetic Pelota activity. A week filled with discovery awaits!

5. **No-Cook Recipe Workshop**
Join a bilingual workshop to explore simple, delicious no-bake recipes. Open to all, with adult supervision required for children under 12. Registration is necessary.

6. **Game On! Board and Video Games**
March Break at the library is the perfect time to enjoy board game workshops and video games.

Whether you prefer strategy or virtual adventures, there's something for everyone. You can also borrow games to enjoy at home.



Winter at the Pierrefonds-Roxboro Borough Hall – A serene snowy landscape in Montreal, adorned with festive decorations under a clear blue sky.

Kick off the break with a classic Canadian treat—maple taffy on snow! Visit the local library to indulge in this sweet delight while supplies last.

3. **Family Movie Time**
Gather the family for movie screenings at the library. Enjoy adventures like "Clifford the Big Red Dog (in French) and Ainbo, Spirit of the Amazon" (in English). Laughter and excitement are guaranteed!

4. **Stimulate Curiosity with Educational Workshops.** The Pierrefonds Library offers a range of activities designed to spark curiosity in

7. **Family Shows: Magic and Laughter Experience** a blend of theater and circus with "Mr. Gazon - À fleur de ville" for children aged 4 and up on Friday, February 28. Later, on March 7, enjoy "Auréo and Lunette," a playful adaptation of Romeo and Juliet for ages 5 and up. Reserve your seats now.

8. **Lace Up Your Skates at Sportplex.** Enjoy free skating sessions from March 3 to March 7, between 10 a.m. and 2:45 p.m., at

See Page 7 March Break



Ontario Filipino- Canadian Community News

Tony A. San Juan, OCT

Filipino-Canadian lawyer runs for Ontario Member of Parliament

Paul Saguil, an award-winning solicitor-barrister is running to be the next Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) for Willowdale, Toronto, Ontario. Saguil is the official Ontario Liberal Candidate in the upcoming provincial election on February 27, 2025.

An acclaimed Filipino-Canadian lawyer and regulatory compliance expert, Saguil has championed equality and human rights in cases before the Supreme Court of Canada. He is dedicated to combating corruption and enforcing economic sanctions against human rights violators and threats to inter-national peace. Also as a committed community leader, Paul has served on various non-profit boards and advisory groups, including the Ontario Justice Education Network, the Wellesley Institute, the federal Judicial Appointments Committee for the Greater Toronto Area, the Ontario Bar Association, id8 Downsview, and The 519. His colleagues and friends noted that he has been a passionate champion for access to justice, education as a pathway to success, and economic inclusion throughout his career.

A member of the Law Society of Ontario, Saguil completed a Bachelor of Arts (BA-Honours) - Philosophy degree from York University and his law education at the Osgoode Hall Law School. Proud of his Filipino heritage, Saguil and his family came to Canada from the Philippines in 1991 and earlier settled in Brampton, Ontario.

In his campaign, P. Saguil said "My career and community volunteerism have always focused on fighting for inclusion and advocating for those whose voices are not always present or heard in places of power. We must bring integrity back to public office and



Paul Saguil, Liberal MPP Candidate for Willowdale

deliver more for Ontarians, rather than insiders." Saguil also cited "Our schools (in Willowdale) are overcrowded, and kids are still being bussed long distances. We need to invest in better healthcare and education for all. I will be a strong voice for our community." He looks forward to "fighting for our province's brighter and more prosperous future!" he added.

The Willowdale riding consists of the part of the City of Toronto bounded on the north by the northern city limit (Steeles Avenue), and on the east, south and west by a line drawn from the city limit south along Victoria Park Avenue, south along Highway 404, west along Finch Avenue East, south along Leslie Street, southwest along Highway 401, northeast along Bathurst Street and north along Yonge Street to the city limit.

The Filipino-Canadian community is proud and agog of Paul Saguil's MPP candidacy. His family, friends, colleagues, and supporters are hopeful that this time a "kababayan" will get elected and represent their voice in the Ontario Parliament. So get out and vote. Your vote matters!

NYPAA to celebrate silver anniversary

The North York Pinoy Athletic Association(NYPAA) a notable family-oriented sports organization also known as North York Aquilas, in North York, Toronto will commemorate its 25th founding anniversary on March 1, 2025(Saturday), from 6:00 to 12:00 PM at St. Peter and St. Paul Banquet Hall, 251 Milner Road, Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario.

For their milestone celebration, the officers, members, families, friends,

and supporters of NYPAA are distinctively excited and proudly prepared to present a meaningful, memorable, and enjoyable evening of fun, food, dancing, and engaging program. Some dignitaries, community leaders, special guests, donors, and supporters are invited to the affair. Moreover, expected to join the celebration are past and present NYPAA officers and coaches.

NYPAA, historically, came into

fruition in 1999 as a response to the need of the growing Filipino Canadian families in the Greater Toronto Area(GTA), especially in North York for "a social vehicle and sporting tool." Over the years it has significantly grown as one of the leading community-centred organizations with sports initiatives and programs, developing, offering and challenging members particularly the youth in amateur athletic competitions.

The current NYPAA Executive Directorate is composed of Board Chair Sharonne Salanguit, Board Secretary/Treasurer Vilma Tahsin, Board Members Brenda Agoncillo, Victor Montero, Bob San Juan, Ed Sotto & Roger Tarca, Sports Commissioner Adam Davison & Rhey Ellorimo, and Youth Training & Development Officers Adam Davison, Mark Demusala, Rhey Ellorimo, Jessie Facun, Alvin Garsin, Jay Mallari, Marvin Montecillo, Victor Montero, and Keach Delos Trinos.

As a community-based association with members from across the province, NYPAA had built a reputation for promoting athletic events such as basketball, volleyball, fitness, and sporting clinics to ensure productive leisure time for parents, members, parents and their children. A dedicated member of the North American Basketball Association(NABA) and Ontario Basketball



Association(OBA), NYPAA actively participates and supports intercity basketball tournaments across North America, local intramurals and house leagues thus helping promote understanding and friendly competitions among participants and organizers including players, parents, coaches, officials, and volunteers.

For NYPAA membership, interested individuals and groups are requested to contact Sharonne Salanguit at 289-200-8653 or Vilma Tahsin at 416-697-7201. Other inquiries, please email northyork.aquilas@gmail.com. NYPAA's social media includes: IG://northyorkaquilas, FB://NYPAA, and website at www.nypaa.ca.

PIDC Board okays 2025 Program of Activities

In its general meeting on January 12, 2025, the Philippine Independence Day Council(PIDC) deliberated and approved the activities it will organize, offer, participate and pursue in 2025. PIDC is a non-profit umbrella organization of Filipino-Canadian provincial, regional, professional, cultural and social organizations based in Ontario. It was incorporated in 1997 to organize, promote and preserve Filipino arts, culture, history and heritage in Canada.

Presided by Tom Tan, PIDC President, the virtual meeting was conducted from 1:30 to 4:00 pm. . After a call to order, the attendees adopted the meeting agenda, the September 22, 2024, general meeting minutes and the 2024 PIDC Financial Statement. At the lively Zoom meeting, after serious debate and discussion, the PIDC officers and directors tentatively approved the following activities for 2025:

- Sine Film Festival on April 11-13, 2025
- Filipino Heritage Month Celebration in June 2025
- June 1st(Sunday) - Salo Salo Picnic and Dr Jose Rizal's Birth Anniversary at Earl Bales Park, North York.
- June 7th(Saturday) - George Brown College Filipino BBQ
- June 12th(Thursday) -Philippine Independence Day Flag Raising at Toronto City Hall in partnership with Philippine Consulate General Toronto.
- Miss PIDC and Little Miss PIDC Pageant at the Korean Cultural Centre, North York, Toronto on July 26, 2025.
- Mabuhay Golf Tournament in July 2025
- Mabuhay Arts & Culture Festival from August 18-24, 2025

Mabuhay Basketball Cup -
Mabuhay Art Exhibit – OCAD
•University and Philippine Artist Group (PAG) partnership
•Mabuhay Leadership Forum in partnership with Pwr Forward/Filipinos in the 6ix
•Mabuhay Gala – August 21, 2025
•Mabuhay Philippines Festival – August 23-24, 2025
•2nd Mabuhay Songwriting Contest, tentatively set in October 2025.
•Halo-Halo sa George Brown College - a Networking Event and GBC Open House
•PIDC Family Christmas Party on December 6, 2025 (Saturday)

Prexy T. Tan, "to kick the ball rolling", has already designated some event chairpersons while other PIDC members volunteered to lead and guide specific activities. However, the PIDC Executive Board expresses that the venues and schedules for some of the planned events and activities may change or adjust to meet some expectations or any unforeseeable circumstances. PIDC hopes and promises that this year's events will be more productive and meaningful to everyone.





Alpha Phi Omega's 100th anniversary in Montreal

By Syvel Deslauriers

We are thrilled to announce the symbolic opening of our 100th-anniversary celebration for Alpha Phi Omega, on January 25, 2025, at the Bust of Dr. Jose P. Rizal in McKenzie Park, Montreal, Quebec. Our theme for this momentous occasion is "Salubong sa Isang Siglo ng APO," which encapsulates the remarkable journey we have undertaken over the past century.

as we embark on the next chapter of APO's journey.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to all our Brothers and Sisters who have devoted their time, energy, and expertise to bettering their communities. Your unwavering commitment to serving others without expecting anything in return is a true testament to the impactful legacy of our organization.



APO de Montreal group photo shows officers and members in front of the bust of Dr. Jose Rizal at McKenzie King Park, January 25, 2025.

This milestone not only highlights our enduring legacy but also reaffirms our commitment to our Cardinal Principles of Leadership, Friendship, and Service.

As we celebrate our past, let us also look forward with enthusiasm and determination. We salute all members of Alpha Phi Omega for their continued



These guiding values empower us to build a better community and foster a lifelong dedication to serving, helping, and giving to others. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to lead, serve, and cultivate future leaders

dedication to service as we enter the next century. Together, may we strive to make an even greater impact on society. Here's to another hundred years of excellence!
(Sent by: Claro Bermudez)

From Page 5 March break

Sportplexe. Bring your family and friends to practice your skating skills.

9. Embrace the Outdoors

There's nothing better than spending quality time outdoors! Our parks provide the perfect playground for sliding, outdoor skating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snow sculptures. The choice is yours!

10. Dive into a Good Book

March Break is the perfect time to escape into captivating stories. Visit the Pierrefonds and William-G.-Boll libraries to discover new books that will transport you to exciting worlds. Whether you're into novels, comic books, or manga, our libraries have everything you need.

11. Art Workshops at the

Library - Participate in a variety of artistic workshops for all ages. Whether it's crafting during "Brico à la Biblio," relaxing with "Coffee and Coloring," or creating eco-friendly flowerpots from recycled materials, there's something for everyone. Join us for a week full of creativity and fun!

12. Explore Cap-Saint-Jacques Nature Park.

Take a breath of fresh air at Cap-Saint-Jacques Nature Park. With kilometers of trails, it's the perfect place to walk or practice winter sports. Equipment rental is available on-site.

With such a diverse array of activities, Pierrefonds-Roxboro ensures that this March Break will be both entertaining and memorable for all families. #

REM Transit System Progresses with Latest Phase of Dynamic Testing

(By Leo Lete, Local Journalism Initiative)

Montreal, QC – February 12, 2025 – The Réseau express

simulations to assess system performance, reliability, and safety under various conditions.

Milestone Achieved in Testing




Montreal's Future in Motion - The REM light rail system enters dynamic testing, bringing the city one step closer to a high-frequency, automated transit network set to launch in 2025." Photo by: Ron Stang

métropolitain (REM), Montreal's ambitious light rail transit project, has entered its latest phase of dynamic testing, bringing the city closer to a fully operational network. This critical phase involves extensive real-world

The dynamic testing phase, which began earlier this month, involves running REM's automated trains along newly completed sections of the network at full speed while

See Page 18 REM Transit System




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Monthly News

by Angela Lacuesta

Intern Journalist

National Ethnic Press & Media Council
of Canada Internship Program

Tasiutigiiit Fosters Cultural Empowerment of Indigenous Youth and Their Families

An organization named Tasiutigiiit is an Indigenous community-oriented organization that focuses on supporting Indigenous children and their adopted or foster families in Montreal. The organization's main objective is to connect Métis, Inuit and First Nation children with their heritage by providing a culturally enriching environment for both the youth and their parents through its various resources and services.

This community support group

Manager; Youth Outreach Coordinator Dez Gregoire; Resident and Knowledge Keeper Sarah Carrière alongside the many other staff members and workers who assist in the empowerment of Inuit and First Nation people. They ensure the core principles of the community: participation, cultural knowledge, respect, youth focusing, recognition of needs and integrity which are implemented in all areas of the organization.



Photo shows an outdoor activity and story telling

began in 1990 and has continued to grow throughout the years. It provides a large range of programs and services that encourage the inclusion of Indigenous culture in the lives of children in foster or adoptive care while also providing learning sessions for their families. Youth opportunities include workshops that introduce traditional skills such as drum dancing, cooking, sewing as well as other traditional activities such as community picnics, trip opportunities to areas of Nunavik camps to further experience Inuit and First Nation culture. It has also youth drop-in learning programs and several other community building activities. Parent groups and workshops are available for families to learn about past and present Indigenous history, understand the experiences of other Indigenous people who were in foster care and how to support and connect with their children.

Tasiutigiiit is headed by the following people: Barbara McDonald, president; Valerie Dussault, Vice-president; Stephanie Bourassa,

In the future, Tasiutigiiit expects to continue contributing to the Indigenous community by creating more opportunities and services for the youth, expanding the program outside of Montreal, collaborating with other partners to provide needed resources and continue supporting the voices of the Indigenous youth in the organization. Tasiutigiiit benefits youth and foster adoptive families by providing them with an opportunity to learn about Inuit and First Nation culture which enable them to connect with their cultural identities and meet a community of people who they can forge relationships with.

Those who would like to support Tasiutigiiit in its objectives can donate towards their cause, share the organization with others or work with the association.

For more information regarding the Tasiutigiiit association, to become a member, to donate or to find Indigenous resources, visit their website at <https://tasiutigiiit.org>.

Moisson Montreal provides food security for the island of Montreal

Moisson Montreal is a non-profit organization that aims to provide community organizations with food and hygienic products which are distributed across the Island of Montreal for those in need. Maggie Borowiec, the Director of Philanthropy of Moisson Montreal states, "Our

them as much food as they need so that they can be offering the services out to the population". Another achievement is in 2023,

Moisson Montreal began an urban agriculture program with two other organizations, increasing the quality of fresh produce. This



Volunteers in the Moisson Montreal warehouse helping with the food sorting process to help those who suffer from food insecurities. (Moisson Montreal)

mission is to provide an optimal food supply for community agencies that are serving Montreal's most vulnerable people while actively participating in the development of sustainable solutions to promote food security". This organization indirectly supports the population through the nearly 300 community agencies on the Island of Montreal. To support a wide variety of individuals, the agencies allocate resources amongst several charity initiatives such as meal programs, grocery assistance, shelter programs and programs designed to aid seniors and children.

The organization began as a result of the founder, Pierre Legault, realizing that there were high levels of food insecurity amongst the younger generation during his work as a psycho-educator. Last year, Moisson Montreal marked its 40th anniversary after opening in 1984. The main people involved in this organization are the employees and the volunteers ranging from retired volunteers, corporate groups, schools, social clubs and the general public. In 2024, there were around 8,000 individuals who volunteered in the warehouse. This was equivalent to 84,000 volunteer hours and 46 full-time positions. The help of the community both directly and indirectly allows the organization to continue aiding the vulnerable population.

Throughout the years, Moisson Montreal has been able to improve and maintain its goals as a food bank organization. One achievement, Borowiec mentioned, is the survey of satisfaction used to ensure that needs are being met. She states, "We're happy when our agencies are happy because that's our whole reason for being to serve them. It is important for us to be able to give

collaboration enabled organic vegetables to be grown on fields in and outside of Montreal. The expansion of hubs in East Montreal was also highlighted so agencies could easily access the distributed goods. Obstacles that Moisson Montreal have faced are related to the growing need for food assistance and the difficulty of keeping up with this increase. The rising food insecurity has led to the need for more partners, food donors or individuals to provide more food.

In June 2025, Moisson Montreal will host its annual golf tournament. This fundraising event encourages individuals, business groups and other communities to join as sponsors or as participants. To raise money for the organization's mission, participation and direct donations or involvement by contacting Moisson Montreal directly is greatly appreciated.

Moisson Montreal aims to provide relief for those suffering from food insecurity across Montreal. Maggie Borowiec says, "We are so grateful for everyone who supports us; we are very fortunate that people are very generous. We find that in Montreal, people care about their neighbours and they have a lot of compassion, so we're very grateful to all the people who get involved, whether as money donors or as volunteers, because we can't really do it without community". Today, according to Moisson Montreal's 2024 Hunger Count, the organization has distributed 19.3 million kilograms of food, serving 300 community agencies in combating food insecurities that have helped nearly 158,000 people in Montreal.

To have more information or to get involved, visit their website at moissonmontreal.org

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Benjamin Fanklin



Jennilee Austria Bonifacio's story - Empowering Newcomers to Canada

By Angela Lacuesta, Intern Journalist

For over 20 years, Jennilee Austria Bonifacio has been a dedicated settlement worker for newly arrived students and the Filipino youth in Ontario. As a consultant with several Ontario school boards, she is the founder of FilipinoTalks, a researcher, a tour guide in Little Manila, a founding member of Salaysay (a community of Filipino-Canadian authors) and a notable author who aims to provide readers with a deeper understanding of Filipino immigration.



Jennilee Austria Bonifacio

Jennilee Austria Bonifacio was born in Sarnia, Ontario. At age 13, she began her involvement within the Filipino community through a Filipino association that had dance troops for tinikling (a folk dance). When she later moved to Toronto, she began

decided to publish her debut book entitled "Reuniting with Strangers: A Novel which highlights the struggles and triumphs of immigrating as a Filipino. It has received several recognitions such as CBC's Best Books of 2023, a finalist for the Jim Wong Chu Emerging Authors Award, won silver in Multicultural Fiction at the 2024 Independent Publisher Book Awards, a finalist of the Toronto Book Awards and was long listed for Canada Reads 2024. A chapter in the novel, "Seven Steps to Reuniting with your Teenage Daughter," is also featured in Magdaragat: An Anthology of Filipino-Canadian Writing.



Jennilee's achievements are in terms of watching the relationships and involvement of the Filipino youth grow after the leadership training in Filipino Talks. She explains, "There' are times when I work in a school and they call down all the Filipino students to come to the cafeteria but they don't even realize how many of them will be there until that moment." Obstacles in her work are mainly related to schools not wanting Filipino-specific programs, however, she considers her job very rewarding as she is able to connect with others in supporting newcomers to Canada.

immersing herself within the Filipino community She completed her degree for a BA in International Studies from Trent University and an MA in Immigration Settlement Studies from Toronto Metropolitan University. She also received a graduate certificate from Humber School for Writers and finished the Emerging Writings Intensive program at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Later on, she worked with newcomer students and she began to see common trends and issues among them. She learned why there was a common increase in dropouts, lack of academic efforts and familial issues that the students experienced.

Jennilee believes in the importance of teachers understanding that newly arrived students may have been separated from their parent(s) for many years. This situation is something that should be taken into consideration especially if they show academic or behavioral struggles. She wants to forge connections and to bring empathy to people who aren't Filipino, so they can better understand and ensure that the students are not left alone. She states: "It's going to be really hard at first and you might feel guilty about the fact that you're not so happy to be here. People are going to say, 'Oh, you should be grateful, and now you're abroad, you're in Canada.' It's totally normal for you to want to come back home or regret coming here, but it'll only get better the more you reach out (...) as you're not alone."

Her personal observations kickstarted the project with the York Center for Asian Research where they spoke to 1200 Filipino students in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. These student interviews revealed that a lack of role models was the main problem which led her to create Filipino Talks, an educational workshop for newcomers, their parents and teachers to help them understand the Filipino community. She says: "People don't understand how much difficulty students have in a new country because there are many things that are unfamiliar - new school, new language, and maybe also a new mom. And that is a lot for any newly arrived high school student."

After working with the community for several years, Jennilee

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about."

WENDY MASS, "THE CANDYMAKERS"

From Page 1 Canada First Rally

which used to mention 'carbon tax election' and 'common sense conservatives.' He emphasized his response to President Donald Trump's tariff threats and said that he would make Canada strong and free. He also made it more like a family day as his wife, Anna Poilievre introduced him and one of his young children was also brought on stage.

With the next federal election campaign likely to begin in a matter of

whether the Conservative slogan "axe the tax" — a pledge to eliminate the consumer carbon price brought in by the Liberals — was still relevant.

"I have to concede, it's an even bigger issue," he said.

"Combining Trump's tariffs with Carney's carbon tax will decimate our industries and destroy the jobs of our workers."

He attacked the record of the "Carney-Trudeau Liberals," blaming the government's policies for a raft of



Backdrop of large CANADA letters and many Canadian flags, for Pierre Poilievre's Conservative Party rally Feb 15, 2025, on stage with his wife Ana Poilievre. [livestream]

weeks, Poilievre's speech felt like an unofficial launch to the Conservative campaign against the man he believes will be his next opponent: Liberal leadership hopeful and former central banker Mark Carney.


Poilièvre said Trump's tariff threat had caused him to reflect on

problems including the rising cost of living and Canada's lack of export options for oil and gas.

Poilièvre laid out broad strokes of a plan to "restore the promise of Canada."

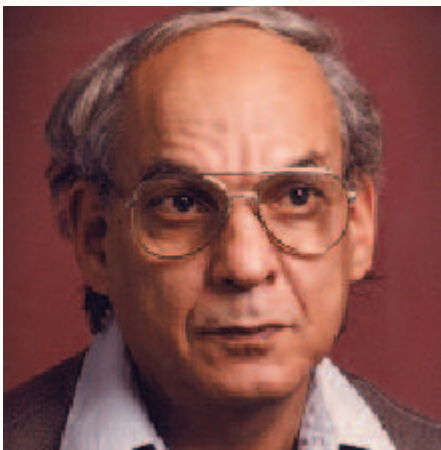
That begins, he said, with "the

See Page 13 Canada First Rally



In loving memory

Rest in peace.



Abderrahmane Benali-Kharroubi
March 11, 1941-January 7, 2025

The family and relatives of Abderrahmane "Dahmane" Benali-Kharroubi share the sad news of his passing on January 7, 2025 from a long illness. He was a retired civil engineer who worked with the City of Montreal, Permits Division, for many years. He is survived by his wife, Zenaida; nephews Sofianne and Nabil and younger brother Kamal who lives in Algiers, Algeria. He is interred at the Cimetière Musulman, Laval, QC Canada.



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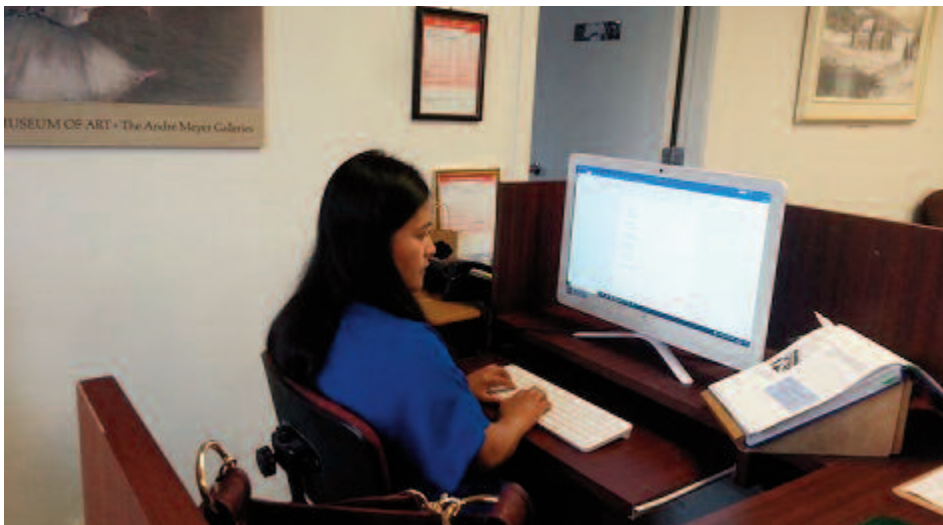
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PAB Batch 11, July 3, 2017 graduation at Gilmore College International headquarters on 7159 ch. de la Cote des Neiges, Montreal.



Souvenir of students from different countries - Cambodia, Tunisia and Venezuela who enrolled in English & French courses.



A student taking a keyboarding course at Gilmore College Intl. Individualized instruction, 6 to 9 hours weekly, a 45-h course.

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Gilmore College International provides immigrants the tools for a successful career change. The training and the skills I learned gave me the confidence to work as a nursing aide. Adele Lascano (PAB graduate, October 2009)



I found the job that I love because of the skills and knowledge I learned from studying at Gilmore College International (Ethel Tugna, PAB graduate, Class 2011)



Gilmore College International gave me the opportunity to start a new career. I got a job easily because I learned new things from the course which focused on how to care for the elderly and the sick. I'm proud to be part of Gilmore College International. (Giselle Arellano, PAB graduate, Class 2011)



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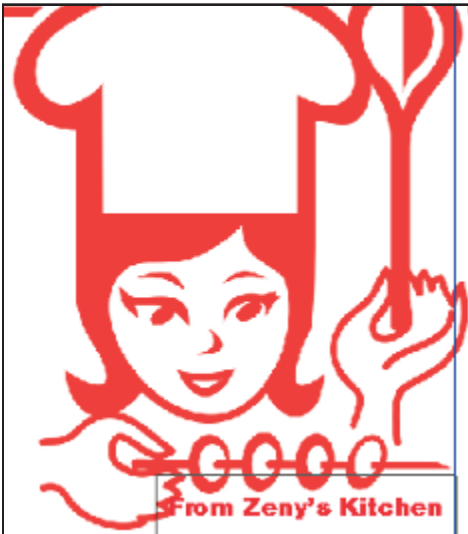


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Selected recipes from ethnic cuisines



Thai - Cashew Chicken

Ingredients

Cups

Metric

2 tbsp peanut oil (or canola or vegetable oil)

1/2 cup raw cashews, unsalted (Note 1 for roasted)

1 garlic clove, finely minced

1/2 onion (brown, yellow, or white), cut into thin wedges

200g/7oz chicken thighs, skinless and boneless, sliced into 1cm / 1/3" thin strips (Note 2)

2 green onions, cut into 2.5cm / 1" lengths, white part separated from green part

1/2 red cayenne pepper, deseeded and finely sliced on the diagonal (omit or reduce if preferred) (Note 3)

Sauce:

1 tbsp oyster sauce (Note 4)

1 tsp dark soy sauce (Note 5)

2 tsp fish sauce (Note 6)

1 tsp white sugar

3 tbsp water

Serving:

Red chilli, finely sliced (optional garnish)

Jasmine rice, for serving (or other rice of choice)

Cook Mode

Prevent screen from sleeping

Instructions

Sauce: Mix all the Sauce ingredients in a small bowl.

Cook cashews: Heat oil over medium heat in a wok or large skillet. Add cashews and cook for 5 minutes until they become a dark golden colour and crunchy (yep, you might have to eat one to check!). Remove from skillet with a slotted spoon.

Garlic & onion: Turn heat up to high. Add garlic and onion. Cook for 30 seconds.

Chicken: Add chicken. Cook for 1 minute until the outside changes from pink to white.

White part of green onion & chilli: Add white part of green onions and chilli. Cook for 1 minute until chicken is just cooked through.

Add Sauce: Cook for 1 minute until it reduces down to a syrup, coating the

chicken nicely.

Green onion & cashews: Add green part of green onions and cashews. Toss for 30 seconds.

Serve: Transfer to serving dish. Serve with jasmine rice, or other rice of choice, garnished with extra red chilli (if you can handle the heat!).

Recipe Notes:

1. Cashews – Pan-toasting raw cashews has the most superior flavour. But if you only have roasted cashews, that's fine too. Just cook for around 1 1/2 minutes until they are lightly golden and they smell nutty.

Do not use salted cashews, it will make the dish too salty.

2. Chicken – Thighs will yield a juicier result than breast. But breast will also work just fine. Consider tenderising the breast the Chinese way. It makes it so much softer and juicier! (No need to do it for thigh).

3. Chilli – A golden rule is the larger the chilli, the less spicy it is (usually!) I've used large red cayenne pepper here which is not that spicy but still has a decent kick to it. You can omit or reduce the chilli if you wish. If you want spicier, consider using Thai birds-eye chillis –

4. Oyster sauce – This can be substituted with vegetarian oyster sauce, sold in some large grocery stores. It's actually not bad (no offence to veggo's)!
5. Dark soy sauce – This soy has a more intense colour and flavour than light soy and all-purpose soy. It stains the chicken an appealing mahogany colour. If you use light or all-purpose soy, the dish colour and flavour will not be as good!
More on different soy sauces here, and when you can sub with what.

6. Fish sauce – Fish sauce is a traditional ingredient in Thai cooking, and has more complex flavours than soy sauce. You can sub with more soy sauce, but the flavour will not be quite as good. (The oyster sauce still goes some way to compensate if you don't use fish sauce, as it too is packed with umami!).



Beef Sukiyaki

Sukiyaki features vegetables, noodles, tofu, and steak served in a steaming, flavorful broth made with dashi, mirin, and soy sauce. This Japanese dish is traditionally cooked at the table in a pot of simmering broth. In this recipe, it's cooked on the stovetop for convenience.

Ingredients:

Ingredients

For the sukiyaki sauce:

2 tablespoons sake

1/4 cup mirin

1 tablespoon brown sugar

1/4 cup soy sauce

To prepare the sukiyaki:

1/2 block firm tofu

(sliced into 1/2-inch/1cm thick slices)

5 dried shiitake mushrooms

(rehydrated)

1 package enoki mushrooms (ends trimmed and rinsed)

2 cups napa cabbage (cut into 2-inch/5cm pieces)

2 cups tong ho (chrysanthemum greens, washed)

2 scallions (white and green parts separated)

1 bundle dried mung bean vermicelli noodles (or shirataki noodles)

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

12 oz. thinly sliced fatty beef

2 cups dashi stock (mushroom soaking liquid, or chicken stock)

2 cups steamed rice

2 egg yolks (pasteurized, optional)

Instructions

In a pot over a portable electric or gas cooktop (or just your regular stove) over medium heat, add 2 tablespoons sake, 1/4 cup mirin, 1 tablespoon brown sugar, and 1/4 cup soy sauce in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, turn off the heat, make sure all the sugar is dissolved, and transfer to a bowl. Then prepare all your sukiyaki ingredients—the tofu slices, rehydrated shiitake mushrooms, enoki mushrooms, napa cabbage, tong ho, and scallions. Set aside on a plate. Soak the dried vermicelli noodles in water for 10 minutes.

Heat 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in the pan. Fry the white parts of the scallions in the oil for 2 minutes. Chop the green parts of the scallions finely and set aside.

In the pan with the scallions, add the sliced beef. Sear the beef for 10 seconds, and add a drizzle of your sukiyaki sauce. Fry the meat until it just begins to brown—it should still be a bit pink. Remove from the pot and set aside.

Add the rest of your sukiyaki sauce and 2 cups stock. Bring to a boil, and add the tofu, mushrooms, napa cabbage, and tong ho to the pot in sections. Also drain the vermicelli noodles you soaked and add them to the pot. Cover the pot and bring to a boil. Simmer until the ingredients are cooked through, about 5-7 minutes.

Remove the cover, add the beef back to the pot. Sprinkle with the chopped scallions, and enjoy with rice and egg



Chow Mien

Ingredients

14 oz yakisoba refrigerated noodles, or 16 oz chow mein noodles*

1 lb boneless skinless chicken

breasts

salt and pepper

3 Tablespoon vegetable oil, or canola oil, divided

2 cups finely shredded cabbage* *

1 large carrot, shredded

2 ribs celery, chopped

4 green onions, chopped, white and green separated

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 teaspoons freshly grated ginger

1 cup fresh bean sprouts (optional)

Sauce:

1/4 cup oyster sauce

1/3 cup low-sodium soy sauce

2 Tablespoons sesame oil

1 Tablespoon rice vinegar

1 teaspoon cornstarch

1 Tablespoon light brown sugar

1-2 teaspoons Asian Garlic Chili

Sauce, for spice, optional

Cook Mode

Prevent your screen from going dark

Instructions

Chow mein sauce: In a small bowl, whisk the sauce ingredients together and set aside.

Cook chicken: Heat a large pan or wok on high heat. Add 1 tablespoon oil.

Season chicken with salt and pepper and add to hot pan. Sauté until cooked through, then remove to a plate.

Cook Veggies: Add another tablespoon of oil. Once hot add cabbage, carrots, celery, and the whites of the chopped green onion. Stir fry over high heat for 1-2 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for 30 seconds, then remove everything to a plate.

Noodles: Add last tablespoon of oil to the pan and add the noodles. Cook for 1 minute. Add the sauce and cook, tossing to coat. Return veggies and chicken to the pan, along with fresh bean sprouts.

Serve immediately, garnished with green onion.

broccoli, and water chestnuts would all work well.

Protein: Substitute beef, tofu, or shrimp.

Vegetarian: Leave out the chicken, or swap with tofu or your favorite vegetarian protein source.

Vegan: Leave out the chicken, or swap with your favorite vegan protein source.

Substitute hoisin sauce instead of the oyster sauce.

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Social Tidbits

Montreal Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

Hello my social tidbits loyalists! Happy Valentines! How did you spend the special day with your special someone? 'Where do I begin to tell the story of how great a love can be?' goes the familiar song. Please indulge me and our readers by sharing your sweet moments. Please submit to this publication. Don't be shy! I might just have a prize waiting for you. What prize? Secret!

SOCIAL FUNDRAISER

Friends and members of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) gathered on Feb 1, 2025 at Zamboangeña Bella Cucina in Decarie Square, 5354 Rue Vezina for a social bingo event. This is an FHSM fundraiser led by Chairman Al Abdon, whose creativity continues to show no limit. The inclement weather didn't deter the fun-loving 'bingoter'as. They came hoping to win not only the bingo games but the raffle prizes too. It was an afternoon session and the players were provided with a boxed lunch. These games are starting to attract more attention. It's just the kind of socialization and relaxation we all need from time to time – playing games,

eating, winning prizes, and seeing friends. Why not try bingo next time? You might just be surprised. Inquire with the FHSM for the next session.

LIBERAL LEADERSHIP RACE

We, the members of the Seniors of West Island (SWIS) were invited to attend the campaign launch event of Frank Baylis held at 1717 Boulevard Cremazie East on February 7, 2025. Frank is running for the office of the Prime Minister of Canada. Attentively listening to his platform were Roger & Nerie Carvajal, Benny & Lita Bote, Connie Fabro, and yours truly. The 3rd floor room was packed with campaign managers and friends. Frank's resumé is very impressive. An engineer and entrepreneur, he aims to make our economy strong and promote the best health care in Canada. He didn't mince words when he said, "I am a tough businessman."

The Canadian people want a robust economy to match our American neighbors and let's hope Frank will deliver. We all want to see a 'true north strong and free.' The campaign was met with vigorous

accused the Conservative leader of trying to divide people, saying Canada needs a new leader to stand up for Canada amid Trump's threats.

"It's clear that Pierre Poilievre is not that person. No one who runs down Canada will stand up for it. No one who imitates Trump can negotiate with him for Canada. No one who tells you Canada is broken will put Canada first," Carney's statement said.

Poilievre also reiterated policies he's laid out in announcements over the last several weeks: to secure the border with military helicopters and surveillance, to impose mandatory life sentences on people convicted of trafficking more than 40 mg of fentanyl, and to boost defence spending and build a new Arctic military base by cutting foreign aid.

shouts of "Go, Frank, go." **VALENTINE'S PARTY**

A large and well-lit banquet hall in DDO Civic Centre greeted guests of the Filipino Canadian Association of West Island (FCAWI) as they celebrated their Valentine's Party last February 7, 2025. Lorna Mangaser, the FCAWI President appointed two emcees for the evening: Jing Pablo and Philip Ramirez. Together with DJ Dennis Mayuga, they made the night an evening to remember. Dennis played enticing beats that drew people to the dance floor. Yes, Filipinos just love to dance. Many didn't go back to their seats anymore; they just waited for the next music to begin. There were a few tangos and some rock and roll that Benny & Lita Bote took advantaged of, as did Roger & Nerie Carvajal. However, line dancing was the dance for the night. Connie Fabro, Nita Advincula, Myrna Recillo, Dory Isada, Tina Ouana, Roger & Nerie, Benny & Lita, and yours truly enjoyed watching, especially the line dancers stepping in unison. Two ladies with their dancing shoes on were Connie and Nita. They danced non-stop with guests or joined Nola Manuel's line dancing group. Wow, what a night with good food, good drinks, and good friends. DDO Mayor Alex Bottausci was the guest of honor. As a testament to his social stature, many people clamored to have a picture with him. They just wouldn't let him go without the shutter of their cameras. He patiently and gamely posed with them. And of course I appreciated the generous attention that came my way. Many people, as I do,

The crowd was on its feet, cheering and chanting, as Poilievre wrapped his speech with a promise to "end cancel culture and stop the war on our history."

"It will be the official policy of my government to reinstate Sir John A, his statues and his name, in our parks, public structures and our places of national importance," he said.

He added the Conservatives will return to a version of the Canadian passport that featured Terry Fox and the Fathers of Confederation, and make new citizens pledge their gratitude to the people who built the country.

"Our country is worth fighting for," he said.

In a direct response to Trump, Poilievre said that "the unjustified tariff threats and threats to turn us into the 51st state have united our people to defend the country we love."

With files from the Canadian Press and CTV News

find him engaging and utterly charming. Let's just say he was our celebrity for the night! I commend President Lorna for a fun party. And a shout out goes to former FCAWI President Ador Bulusan who was busy tending to guests throughout the event. I didn't even have a chance to talk with him. And if there was going to be a vote for the Most Graceful on the floor, the winners would be Pros Martinez and wife Gloria. What a pleasure to watch them dance. Friends, we have a year to practice our moves for next year's valentine party!

'Tis the month of love, this February. What is love, you ask? Love is never having to say you're sorry? Love is a many-splendored thing? Well, let's look at how the Bible describes love. It says in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 that If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. So let's love one another. See you next issue and God bless.

Who designed the Canadian Flag?



Dr. George F.G. Stanley was a former lieutenant-colonel in the Canadian Army and a military historian. He would later become Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick. As Dean of Arts at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, during the flag selection process of 1964, he was inspired to propose a concept based on the college's own flag which was accepted by the National Flag Committee.

From Page 9 Canada First Rally

biggest and most patriotic tax cut in Canada's history" and a plan to slash government spending on bureaucracy, consultants and corporate welfare.

It includes a west-to-east pipeline and a resource plan that he said would "incentivize Indigenous leaders" to support projects by allowing companies to pay some of their federal taxes directly to First Nations, something he said "will allow First Nations to spend that on clean drinking water."

He pledged to break down interprovincial trade barriers to make Canada its own biggest trading partner.

Carney issued a news release Saturday that said Poilievre may have a new slogan, but his ideas are old. He

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FILIPINO STAR

SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Who is Michael Sager? Get to know GMA-7's new leading man



Actor Michael Sager

If one has managed to switch on the TV and tune in to GMA-7, there's a high probability of catching a tall, chinito, moreno actor with prominent dimples playing the rich male archetype in many fictional stories.

Chances are, he is none other than Michael Sager, the 21-year-old actor who currently plays opposite former child star-turned-leading lady Jillian Ward in "My Ilonggo Girl."

Among all the potential leading men on TV, Michael has been managing to pique the interest of TV viewers with his good looks and beguiling smile.

But who is Michael to edge out the many aspiring leading men from GMA, and even from rival studios?

1. Born in Marinduque; used to don morion at Moriones festival

Michael was born in Gasan, a town in Marinduque.

In an Instagram post on April 7, 2023, Michael shared that he was honored to don again the morion, a costume worn during the Holy Week festival Moriones in Marinduque.

"I grew up seeing people wear the morion mask and outfit



Jillian Ward & Michael Sager

during the Lenten season. As an adult, it takes on a different meaning as I better understand the sacrifice and act of atoning for one's sins. I

am honored to take part in this tradition and I am grateful to be back home in Gasan," Michael wrote in his caption.

2. Grew up in Canada

When he was three, his family immigrated to Vancouver, Canada.

In an interview with GMA News, Michael shared how he missed his family and friends who he grew up with in Canada.

3. First job at 16

Michael said that he learned about hard work and professionalism when he had his first job at 16. His first job was as an ice cream scooper. He also worked as a sales associate

4. Appeared in Disney channel movie

In a GMA article, Michael said that he appeared as a backup dancer in Disney's "Descendants." The 2015 TV film directed by Kenny Ortega was filmed in Vancouver.

5. Almost a 'PBB' housemate

In an interview with The STAR, Michael revealed that it was upon the prodding of his father that he was encouraged to join the popular reality TV show "Pinoy Big Brother" (PBB) in 2021.

Michael said that his father knew the winner of the show's very first season, Nene Tamayo.

He did not push through with "PBB" because of Sparkada, GMA-7's new batch of talents. Composed of 17 talents, Sparkada, through known talent maker Johnny Manahan, was launched in April 2022.

6. Paired with GMA-7's next leading ladies

In his early days, he was paired with fellow Cornerstone talent, singer Zephania. They appeared in the teen-oriented show "Sparkle U."

He was next cast as the third wheel to the love team of Sofia Pablo and Allen Ansay in "Luv Is Caught In His Arms" in 2023.

The following year, he played the role of Euan, originally portrayed by Lee Seung-gi in the Korean drama with the same name, "Shining Inheritance." He played opposite Kate Valdez, one of GMA-7's rising leading ladies of "Encantadia" fame.

This year, he returns to primetime opposite Jillian in the nightly show "My Ilonggo Girl," which premiered last January 10.

7. Film debut

He made his big screen debut in 2023 via the Julia Montes-Alden Richards starrer "Five Breakups and a Romance."

Kris Aquino reveals she is single again, not fit to work yet



Kris Aquino (center, in bed covered with blanket) poses for a photo with Kim Chiu, Miles Ocampo, and Darla, among others.

After her close friend Dindo Balares confirmed her return to work, Kris Aquino clarified that she is not yet cleared to do any job, saying she is currently “underweight” and that the physical pain brought by her autoimmune diseases is “overwhelming.”

Aquino took to Instagram on Saturday, Feb. 22, to share the latest update on her health, beginning her post with the lyrics of Danny Gokey’s “Tell Your Heart to Beat Again.”

“I haven’t posted anything because I didn’t want all those praying for me to feel sad & lose their faith. May I clarify? I’m not yet ‘fit to work’ because I’m very underweight at 37 kilos/82 pounds,” she wrote.

In a postscript to her health update, Aquino revealed she has been single “for sometime now.”

The actress-host shared that her medical team set strict targets for her recovery, including maintaining her white blood cell count above 5.5 for four weeks, improving her hemoglobin level to 9.5, and keeping her weight steady at 90 pounds (40.8 kg).

Aquino, who was battling six autoimmune diseases, revealed that three more infections have been added.

While trying to add humor to her update, the former “Kris TV” host acknowledged the emotional

toll that her health condition has brought to her.

“Bimb said: ‘Mama, you belong in XMen because you’re a mutant.’ Those closest to me now joke- ‘may nadagdag na naman ba sa autoimmune collection mo?’ My ready reply is: “‘CryBaby’ for now ang hino-hoard ko.”... Kung kilala nyo ko, songs I choose reveal feelings I prefer not to elaborate on. Having complicated autoimmune diseases and being allergic to all NSAIDS, steroids, pain relievers, as well as antibiotics and Immunoglobulin Therapy many times, the physical pain is overwhelming,” she stated.

Aquino also took the opportunity to reveal her current relationship status after she was previously rumored to be dating a general surgeon.

“I’ve always been honest with all of you, for some time now I have been single, no boyfriend so clearly no fiancé. I never gave details while we were a couple so it makes no sense to elaborate now. Thank you for your love and concern,” she ended her post.

The 54-year-old actress and host recently returned to the Philippines with 11 companions including her youngest son Bimby and her rumored doctor boyfriend. At the time, Aquino’s photo with a mystery man beside her on board the plane went viral online. ■

Sam Milby confirms break-up with Catriona Gray



Catriona Gray and Sam Mibby at the ABS-CBN Ball in 2023

Sam Milby confirmed on Tuesday that he and Miss Universe 2018 Catriona Gray have broken up, nearly a year since rumors about their split started.

The former couple got engaged in 2023, but fans noticed last year that Gray removed posts about their engagement on her Instagram account.

Speaking to ABS-CBN News at the sidelines of the media conference of his series “Saving Grace,” Milby set the record straight about the status of his relationship with Gray.

“If you want to ask if we are okay, we are okay. Wala kaming problema,” he said.

Asked directly if they are still together, Milby said: “No.”

“Kami ni Cat, we’ve always been private about our relationship,” he also said. “We share certain things nung na-engaged kami, but in terms of the details, and buhay namin, we haven’t really shared.”

Milby and Gray were recently spotted at TJ Monterde’s concert, with the beauty queen seen crying during one of the songs. Milby, for his part, said it was his first time to hear some of Monterde’s emotional ballads.

“If you wanna ask her what she was feeling, I can’t speak for her. I know that we’re okay, kahit after nung concert I said, I’ll go to the backstage. ‘Cause we’re okay,” he said.

Milby, who was a few seats away from Gray during the Monterde concert, said he is moving on from the breakup by “focusing on work, just growing.”

NO THIRD PARTY

He also cleared up some issues regarding his breakup with Gray, including allegations that Moira Dela Torre was a third party.

“There was never a third party sa amin ni Cat. That needs to be cleared. There is no truth to it at all,” said Milby.

“It makes me sad, may babala ako sa mga tao. Please mag-ingat kayo sa mga nakikita nyo sa online. If there’s no evidence, ‘wag niyong paniwalaan yung nakikita nyo because in this incident, there’s absolutely no truth to it at all,” he added.

Milby said that he and Dela Torre used to be “very close,” particularly at the start of the singer’s career.

“Sobrang close kami before, and I guess people wanted to connect our closeness to may nangyari sa amin,” he said.

When asked if he is still friends with the singer, Milby said: “We are not friends anymore.”

However, he declined to elaborate, only maintaining that they are no longer close.

“It’s an issue that’s really sensitive,” added Milby, who is one of many artists from Cornerstone Entertainment to unfollow Dela Torre on Instagram.

CONTINUED BATTLE WITH DIABETES

The past three weeks have been a struggle for Milby, as his sugar level has been spiking up even as he continues to control his diet.

The actor revealed in June 2024 that he has Type 2 diabetes.

“I’ve been hitting over 400, over 300, so it’s a bit... it’s not been great so I wanted to ask my endo doctor na ano yung problema. ‘Cause I haven’t been changing my diet, and eating habits but it’s been spiking pa rin,” he said.

“Not great in terms of my blood sugar, but it’s still manageable,” he added. ■

Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.15*

Andi Eigenmann says new tattoo is in honor of Jaclyn Jose

**Andi Eigenmann**

Andi Eigenmann revealed that her new tattoo is in honor of her late mom, Jaclyn Jose.

The content creator got a palm leaf tattoo on her right arm days before commemorating the award-winning actress' first death anniversary.

On Instagram, Andi said that the tattoo has multiple meanings, but "all relating to the facets of her being that I would also like to embody." She said it represents Jaclyn's strength, which remained despite her challenges and is "The most admirable thing about her."

The tattoo also means victory, as Andi said she witnessed Jaclyn "always striving for excellence in doing what she loved most. Her dedication to evolving in her art was a testament to her passion. What a privilege to have this woman as my mother."

"She won many accolades for this, and the first Asian Palm d'Or winner for Best Actress at the Cannes Film Festival so far, is just one of them. I'll always cherish this

moment, and the fact that she chose to share this with me."

"Recently I've come to realise that there is no better way than to take a good look at this life that she gave me. The best gift yet. And to continue to treasure and cherish it by living it the best way I know how. Just as she would always want me to," she said.

"As grief changes me, I would like to carry these facets [of] who she was, alongside those of mine that I know she always loved," she added.

To end her post, Andi told her Nanay, "This journey of grief has been long and tough, and quite frankly, sometimes dark. But I believe that the love you showered me with should be enough to trust that I will again see the light."

Jaclyn passed away on March 2, 2024. Andi revealed in a press conference that it was due to a heart attack.

Celebrities and industry colleagues mourned the award-winning actress and paid tribute to her on social media. ■

Katrina Halili opens up about daughter Katie's autism

**Katrina Halili with daughter Katie**

Katrina Halili opened up about her daughter, Katie, who is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

On Monday's "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda," the Kapuso star shared that she found out about Katie's condition when she was around three

years old.

"Noong mga almost three years old po siya, wala siyang eye contact pag tinatawag siya. Sabi nung doctor niya na ipa-check ko daw kasi walang eye contact. Tapos, basta mga ganun yung symptoms niya. Tapos yun nga, na-diagnose na

po siya na meron," she said.

Despite this, Katrina said she never got scared for her daughter, and bravely faced Katie's condition.

"Mas more on hindi [natakot]. Mas more on ginamot. Meron kasing ibang tao ayaw eh. Galit. 'No, hindi. Hindi ganun anak ko.' May ganun eh. May mga naririnig po akong ganun. Ayaw. Pero ako ano. Siyempre, sinunod ko ano 'yung mga kailangan niya. Therapy, ganiyan," she shared.

Katrina also admitted that it was tough at first, saying that she would cry as there were times before when she couldn't be with her daughter.

"Medyo [mahirap]. Kapag hindi mo talaga inaral, parang maguguluhan ka na lang. May times dati na naiyak ako na hindi ko nakakasama 'yung anak ko. Ang gulo-gulo. Nag-tantrums ng bonggang-bongga," she said, adding that she would often envy her

friends who are together with their children.

"Mahirap, pero kailangang tanggapin mo. 'Yun lang."

Right now, Katrina shared that Katie is OK and described her as a sweet girl.

"Ngayon, sobrang okay na siya. Okay na siya kasama, masarap siya kasama, masarap siya kausap. Sobrang sweet. Gano'n talaga siguro po pag mga umpisa."

Katie is Katrina's daughter with her ex-boyfriend, Kris Lawrence. She has said before that she and the singer have a co-parenting setup.

During her guesting on Monday, she also told Tito Boy she is "inspired" and that her heart is "happy," but did not go into much detail.

Her answer came over a year after her boyfriend, former Wao, Lanao Del Sur Vice Mayor Jeremy Guiab, passed away in January 2024.

Amazon warehouse closures in Quebec have led to thousands of layoffs

Layoffs so far totalling over 4,500, including delivery service partners



Amazon delivery trucks leave the DXT4 warehouse in Laval, Que., Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025. Amazon Canada is closing all seven of its warehouses in Quebec. (Christinne Muschi/The Canadian Press)

(CBC News, January 31, 2025) In addition to the roughly 2,000 employees laid off by Amazon after the company announced it would be closing its Quebec warehouses, more than 2,500 other people employed by smaller carriers subcontracted by the company have also lost their jobs.

The shockwaves from the announcement last week by the U.S. online retail giant continue in the province as the closures are expected to take place over several weeks, concluding on March 22.

Quebec's Labour Ministry says it's received notices of mass layoffs from 23 logistics and transport

companies linked to Amazon, known as delivery service partners (DSPs).

According to figures compiled by Radio-Canada, the total number of layoffs resulting from Amazon's closure of its seven Quebec warehouses has risen to 4,543.

The company encourages the creation of these kinds of smaller delivery companies on its website, boasting startup costs as low as \$15,000 with profits of between \$75,000 and \$175,000. The website also says 4,400 DSPs have been created since 2018, employing more than 390,000 people in 20 countries.

As of Friday, Quebec is still on the list of available locations for those interested in applying for the DSP program.

Amazon has denied any link between the closures and the unionization of 250 employees at the DXT4 warehouse in Laval, Que., in recent months.

But labour experts have said they believe otherwise.

In an interview with CBC News last week, Adam King, an assistant professor in the labour studies program at the University of Manitoba, said Amazon had tried to contest the certification of the union's bargaining unit and lost.

"I think essentially what's happening here is that the clock was ticking down on a first collective agreement," King said.

A collective bargaining agreement could have led to the union expanding to other facilities in the province, King suggested.

Amazon told Radio-Canada it had decided to return to "a third-party delivery model, supported by small local businesses, similar to the one we had until 2020," the year it began to build the massive warehouses in Quebec. #

'Made in Quebec' shop sales exploding after Amazon closures, tariff threats

Following threats of U.S. tariffs and Amazon's departure from Quebec, many in the province are looking to buy local.

A company in Brossard on Montreal's South Shore wants to become the province's go-to for e-commerce, selling everything from condiments to candles to jewellery, all made in Quebec.

Signé Local co-owner Dawei Ding said Quebec-made products are everywhere, but what's missing is a better way to buy them.

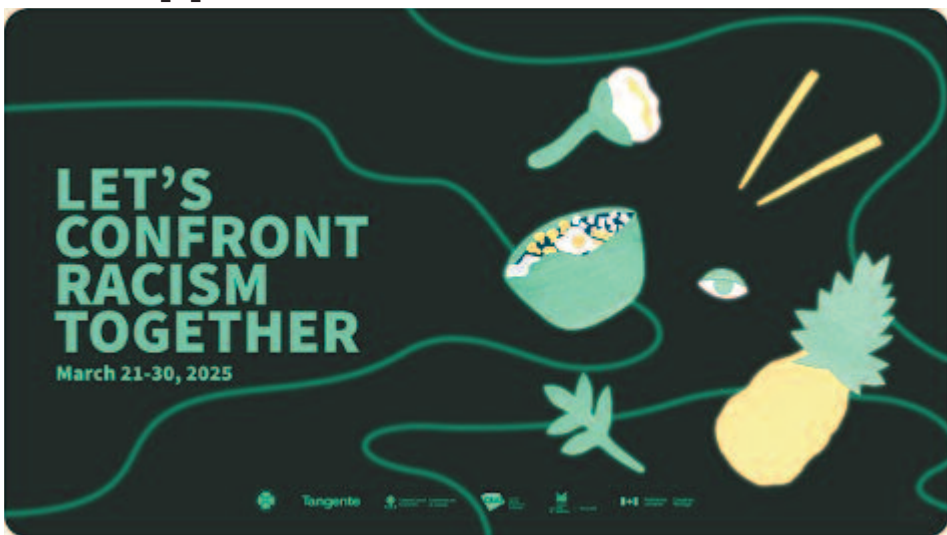
"Right now, Quebec lacks a platform that's easy accessible where we can find all Quebec made products," said Ding.

Ding and Louis Lesperance own the shop selling thousands of products from around 200 suppliers. The chain has four locations: three in Montreal, and one in Quebec City.

Their main hub at Dix-30 handles all the online orders, but that's about to change.

Before the end of February, Signé Local is launching its own online marketplace. (With files from the Canadian Press, Feb 9, 2025).

Festival Acces Asie presents "Piña," a Philippine mini-fiesta downtown



As part of the Action Week Against Racism in Quebec, Festival Accès Asie is committed to the fight against racism through the arts with Let's Confront Racism Together for its 4th edition.

For the 2025 edition, in partnership with Tangente, Centre KAPWA, and Soft Gong, the festival celebrates pride by focusing on creativity, community engagement, and recognition as anti-racist strategies, while maintaining the festive approaches from the previous edition.

Presented by the FAA in partnership with Tangente, come experience the energy of PIÑA by FakeKnot at Orange Space! A choreographic piece that explores Filipino identity and memory through dance, music, and textiles. Inspired by piña, a Filipino fabric made from pineapple

leaves, PIÑA symbolizes the fragility and strength of diasporic peoples.

Before each show, we invite you to a mini fiesta featuring karaoke, Filipino bites and an exhibition starting at 6pm! The Wilder café-bar transforms into a true party with the sounds and flavors of the Philippines!

Schedule: March 27, 28, 29, 2025 – 7 PM (mini fiesta at 6 PM) / March 30, 2025 – 4 PM (mini fiesta at 3 PM)

Venue: Tangente – Espace Orange (ÉDIFICE WILDER), Montréal

Accessibility: Place-des-Arts metro Espace Danse is wheelchair accessible via the entrance at 1435 De Bleury Street, where an adapted transport drop-off zone is available. Performance spaces are accessible by elevator. Tickets: \$15 to \$32. For more information: accesasie.com or tangentedanse.ca

Campaigning Begins in Philippine Mid-term Election Amid Vice-Presidential Impeachment Drama

(February 11, 2025) The 90-day campaign period for the Philippines' mid-term elections opened today, against the backdrop of a bitter political feud that culminated in last week's impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte.

A total of 18,280 seats will be up for grabs in the May 12 polls, including all 317 seats in the House of Representatives, half of the 24 seats in the Senate, 82 governorships and vice-governorships, and thousands more executive and legislative positions at the regional and municipal level. (Official campaigning for local positions begins on March 28.)

But the election is set to be dominated by the bitter political feud between Duterte and her one-time ally, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. – one that political analyst and former presidential adviser Ronald Llamas likened this week to "an unfolding saga that could rival any Netflix series." After aligning to remarkable effect ahead of the 2022 presidential election, the relationship between the two top leaders has deteriorated sharply. The resulting rivalry fed into last week's sensational House vote that impeached the vice president, accusing her of "violation of the constitution, betrayal of public trust, graft and corruption, and other high crimes."

Duterte, the daughter of pugnacious former President Rodrigo Duterte, is currently the subject of a House investigation into her alleged misuse of more than 612.5 million pesos (\$10.5 million) of confidential and intelligence funds, both as vice president and



education secretary. She has also been accused of amassing unusual amounts of wealth and threatening the life of President Marcos, his wife, and his cousin Martin Romualdez, the current speaker of the House.

Among the most prominent of the 64 senatorial aspirants are allies and supporters of both Marcos and Duterte. Marcos has endorsed a number of prominent figures, including three former movie actors, the daughter of the country's richest man, and former boxer Manny Pacquiao, who ran against him in the 2022 presidential election.

The impeachment has now added an extra weight of political significance to the battles for the 12 Senate positions. As Reuters noted in a report today, the May 12 election will "effectively decide half of the jurors" for the Senate trial that will decide whether to impeach Duterte and remove her from office, something that would also bar her from running for elected office for life, including for the presidency.

Excerpts of article by Sebastian Strangio published in The Diplomat, Feb. 11/2025. The Diplomat

Editorials that must be read by as many people as possible and raise awareness of the consequences of Trump's policies

Reprinted from the Madawaska Current, a member of the National News Media Council

Trump's tyrannical tariffs

Roger Paul February 3, 2025

EDITORIAL



Tomorrow, Canadians will start experiencing the effect of Donald 'Felonious' Trump's tariffs. He has used several reasons to justify imposing them, all of them replete with his trademark lies, grotesque exaggerations, and unhinged irrelevancies. As recently as Saturday he has repeated his belief that if he cripples Canada financially, it will be forced to become the 51st state. Apart from the stupidity of justifying the imposition of tariffs with this claim, it begs the question why Canadians would want to be part of a country where the "windmills cause cancer," as he has frequently claimed. Also, he should be careful what he wishes for as Canadians are just not into cults.

Reactions by Canadians have been swift, including the booing of the American national anthem at Senators' and Raptors' games over the weekend. Also there are reports of a rapidly growing movement to stop purchasing anything stated to be "Made in America," and also imploring us to stop spending tourist dollars visiting the US. It is reassuring to hear our Liberal candidates to replace Justin Trudeau responding pugnaciously; the current favourite, Mark Carney, promising to "stand up to a bully;" or, as we would suggest, it is more accurate to describe Trump as a "demented bully." The convicted felon is shamelessly aided and abetted by his toxic party which surely now ought to be renamed as the "Repugnant Party."

I recently came across a widely read and circulated opinion by Andrew Coyne, a respected Canadian columnist with The Globe and Mail and a member of the At Issue panel on CBC's The National. Previously, he has been national editor for Maclean's and a columnist with National Post. This piece first appeared in The Globe and Mail on November 6, 2024. The Current believes it should be read by as many Canadians as possible and therefore we use this opportunity to publish it below.

Trump's Election is a Crisis like No Other, Not Only for the U.S. But For the World

Andrew Coyne

Nothing mattered, in the end. Not the probable dementia, the unfathomable ignorance, the emotional incontinence; not, certainly, the shambling, hate-filled campaign, or the ludicrously unworkable anti-policies.

The candidate out on bail in four jurisdictions, the convicted fraud artist, the adjudicated rapist and serial

sexual predator, the habitual bankrupt, the stooge of Vladimir Putin, the man who tried to overturn the last election and all of his creepy retinue of crooks, ideologues and lunatics: Americans took a long look at all this and said, yes please.

There is no sense in understating the depth of the disaster. This is a crisis like no other in our lifetimes. The government of the United States has been delivered into the hands of a gangster, whose sole purpose in running, besides staying out of jail, is to seek revenge on his enemies. The damage Donald Trump and his nihilist cronies can do – to America, but also to its democratic allies, and to the peace and security of the world – is incalculable. We are living in the time of Nero.

The first six months will be a time of maximum peril. NATO must from this moment be considered effectively obsolete, without the American security guarantee that has always been its bedrock. We may see new incursions by Russia into Europe – the poor Ukrainians are probably done for, but now it is the Baltics and the Poles who must worry – before the Europeans have time to organize an alternative. China may also accelerate its Taiwanese ambitions.

At home, Mr. Trump will be moving swiftly to consolidate his power. Some of this will be institutional – the replacement of tens of thousands of career civil servants with Trumpian loyalists. But some of it will be ... atmospheric.

At some point someone – a company whose chief executive has displeased him, a media critic who has gotten under his skin – will find themselves the subject of unwanted attention from the Trump administration. It might not be so crude as a police arrest. It might just be a little regulatory matter, a tax audit, something like that. They will seek the protection of the courts, and find it is not there.

The judges are also Trump loyalists, perhaps, or too scared to confront him. Or they might issue a ruling, and find it has no effect – that the administration has called the basic bluff of liberal democracy: the idea that, in the crunch, people in power agree to be bound by the law, and by its instruments the courts, the same as everyone else. Then everyone will take their cue. Executives will line up to court him. Media organizations, the large ones anyway, will find reasons to be cheerful.

Of course, in reality things will start to fall apart fairly quickly. The huge across-the-board tariffs he imposes will tank the world economy. The massive deficits, fueled by his ill-judged tax policies – he won't replace the income tax, as he promised, but will fill it with holes – and monetized, at his direction, by the Federal Reserve, will ignite a new round of inflation.

Most of all, the insane project of deporting 12 million undocumented immigrants – finding them, rounding them up and detaining them in hundreds of internment camps around the country, probably for years, before



Canada's premiers made a major lobbying push this week in Washington. Since Trump's inauguration, many federal and provincial leaders have been courting officials in the U.S. capital. (Ben Curtis/The Associated Press) - Photo taken on February 12, 2025.

doing so – will consume his administration. But by then it will be too late.

We should not count upon the majority of Americans coming to their senses in any event. They were not able to see Mr. Trump for what he was before: why should that change? Would they not, rather, be further coarsened by the experience of seeing their neighbours dragged off by the police, or the military, further steeled to the necessity of doing "tough things" to "restore order?"

Some won't, of course. But they will find in time that the democratic levers they might once have pulled to demand change are no longer attached to anything. There are still elections, but the rules have been altered: there are certain obstacles, certain disadvantages if you are not with the party of power. It will seem easier at first to try to change things from within. Then it will be easier not to change things.

All of this will wash over Canada in various ways – some predictable, like the flood of refugees seeking escape from the camps; some less so, like the coarsening of our own politics, the debasement of morals and norms by politicians who have discovered there is no political price to be paid for it. And who will have the backing of their patron in Washington.

All my life I have been an admirer of the United States and its people. But I am frightened of it now, and I am even more frightened of them.#

Editor's note: The above editorial is republished for the simple reason of making everyone aware of the harsh realities that we are facing for the next four years and hopefully, that someone in the judiciary and legislative branches of the U.S. government will do something about the dangers that Trump has wreaked upon the whole world after more than 80 years since the last world war. We must pray for peace, equality and justice for all humanity. #

From Page 7 REM Transit System

simulating passenger loads. Engineers are closely monitoring braking systems, power distribution, and train synchronization to ensure seamless operation once the system is fully launched.

According to the City of Pointe-Claire, dynamic testing has expanded to include increased train frequency and extended hours, further preparing the system for real-world conditions. The testing period will ensure the REM meets rigorous safety and efficiency standards ahead of its official launch planned for fall 2025.

The REM, once completed, will revolutionize public transportation in Montreal by offering a fully automated, high-frequency service connecting key hubs, including downtown Montreal, the South Shore, and Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport. The dynamic testing phase is a crucial step before full-scale service can commence later this year.

Transit authorities have assured that public trials will soon be introduced, allowing residents to experience the system firsthand before its official launch. Additionally, REM authorities have confirmed an extension in testing hours to assess the system's performance under various operational conditions, ensuring full readiness for passenger service.

Next Steps and Anticipated Launch

Following the completion of dynamic testing, the REM will move into a final phase of validation and certification by government transit regulators. If all goes according to schedule, the first sections of the network are expected to be operational by mid-2025, with full network completion slated for 2027.

The REM project continues to progress despite early delays, reaffirming its role as a transformative force in urban mobility. As Montrealers await their first rides on the fully automated system, the latest testing results indicate that the future of transit in the city is on track.#

Trump moves with dizzying speed on his to-do list. But there are warning signs in his first month

By The Associated Press

Published: February 15, 2025 at 9:24AM EST

As U.S. President Donald Trump approaches the first-month mark in his second term, he has moved with dizzying speed and blunt force to reorder American social and political norms and the economy while redefining the U.S. role in the world.

At the same time, he has empowered Elon Musk, an unelected, South African-born billionaire, to help engineer the firing of thousands of federal employees and potentially shutter entire agencies created by Congress.

Those efforts have largely overshadowed Trump's crackdowns on immigration and the U.S.-Mexico border, and his efforts to remake social policy by wiping out diversity, equity and inclusion programs and rolling back transgender rights.

The president has also imposed scores of new tariffs against U.S. trade partners and threatened more, even as economists warn that will pass costs on to U.S. consumers and feed inflation.

Here's a look at the first four weeks:

Mass federal firings begin

The Trump administration fired thousands of workers who were still in probationary periods common among new hires. Some had less than an hour to leave their offices.

Those potentially losing jobs include medical scientists, energy infrastructure specialists, foreign service employees, FBI agents, prosecutors, educational and farming data experts, overseas aid workers and even human resources personnel who would otherwise have to manage the dismissals.

At the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which was created to protect the public after the 2008 financial crisis, employees say the administration not only wants to cut nearly the entire workforce but also erase all its data from the past 12 years. The administration agreed to pause any further dismantling of the agency until March 3, under a judge's order.

While Trump promised to turn Washington upside down, his moves could have far-reaching implications for thousands of federal employees around the country and drive up the unemployment rate if large numbers of layoffs happen at once.

Legal challenges mount

Court challenges to Trump's policies started on Inauguration Day and have continued at a furious pace since Jan. 20. The administration is facing some 70 lawsuits nationwide challenging his executive orders and moves to downsize the federal government.

The Republican-controlled Congress is putting up little resistance, so the court system is ground zero for pushback. Judges have issued more



President Donald Trump walks from the Oval Office to board Marine One as he departs from the South Lawn of the White House, Friday, Feb. 14, 2025, in Washington. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

than a dozen orders at least temporarily blocking aspects of Trump's agenda, ranging from an executive order to end U.S. citizenship extended automatically to people born in this country to giving Musk's team access to sensitive federal data.

While many of those judges were nominated by Democratic presidents, Trump has gotten unfavorable rulings from judges picked by Republican presidents, too. Trump suggested he could target the judiciary, saying, "Maybe we have to look at the judges." The administration has said in the meantime that it will appeal, while White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt railed against the orders slowing the president's agenda, calling each "an abuse of the rule of law."

The administration has notched a few wins, too, most significantly when a judge allowed it to move forward with a deferred resignation program spearheaded by Musk.

The economic outlook worsens

Amid the policy upheaval, the latest economic data could prompt some White House worries.

Inflation rose at a monthly rate of 0.5 per cent in January, according to the Labor Department. Over the past three months, the consumer price index has increased at an annual rate of 4.5 per cent -- a sign that inflation is heating up again after having cooled for much of 2024.

Trump told voters he could lower inflation, and do so almost immediately after taking office. But Leavitt, while blaming Trump's predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden, acknowledged the latest inflation indicators were "worse than expected."

More trouble signs came when the Commerce Department reported that retail sales slumped 0.9 per cent on a monthly basis in January. A drop that large could signal a weakening in consumer confidence and economic growth.

The Federal Reserve's report on industrial production also found that factory output slipped 0.1 per cent

in January, largely due to a 5.2 per cent drop in the making of motor vehicles and parts.

These could all be blips, which means the monthly data in February will really matter.

The 'fair trade' Trump wants isn't necessarily fair

After previously imposing tariffs on China and readying import taxes on Canada and Mexico, Trump rolled out what he called the "big one." He said his administration would put together new tariffs in the coming weeks and months to match what other countries charge.

Other nations hardly find Trump's approach fair.

From their vantage point, he is including items other than tariffs such as value added taxes, which are akin to sales taxes. That means the rates could be much higher than a standard tariff in Europe.

On top of that, Trump plans separate additional tariffs on autos, computer chips and pharmaceuticals, in addition to the 25 per cent tariffs on steel and aluminum that he announced on Monday.

It is not clear whether these trade penalties are mainly negotiating tools or ways for Trump to raise revenues. So far, he has suggested that they are both.

Congress watches its authority erode. But there are signs of pushback

Congress finds itself confounded by the onslaught as its institutional power — as the Constitution's first branch of government with its unmatched authority over federal spending — is being eroded in real time.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said he finds the work of Musk's team "very exciting." Johnson said Trump is "taking legitimate executive action."

But even among congressional Republicans there were small signs of protest emerging — letters being written and phone calls being made — to protect their home-state interests and constituents as funding for programs, services and

government contracts is being dismantled.

Rep. Carlos Gimenez, R-Fla., urged the Homeland Security Department not to issue blanket deportations for Venezuelan migrants who fled their country and now call the Miami-area home. "I'm not powerless. I'm a member of Congress," he said.

Democratic lawmakers have joined protesters outside shuttered federal offices, arguing Trump and Musk had gone too far. Democrats suggested legislation to protect various programs, and even filed articles of impeachment against the president over his plans to bulldoze and redevelop Gaza.

Trump wants a new world order

With his phone call to Russian President Vladimir Putin this past week, Trump is hoping he initiated the beginning of the end of the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

The leaders agreed to have their teams "start negotiations immediately." After getting off the phone with Putin, Trump called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss getting both sides to the negotiating table.

The Putin call is a monumental development in a war that has left hundreds of thousands dead or seriously wounded.

But the way ahead remains complicated.

Zelenskyy said he will not meet with Putin until a plan for peace is hammered out by Trump. Trump has gotten blowback when European leaders sharply criticized him and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth for suggesting that NATO membership was not in the cards for Ukraine.

The White House faces a further quandary with Zelenskyy wanting the U.S. and other countries to provide security guarantees for Ukraine, and Zelenskyy insisting that he and Trump iron out an agreement on the contours of any peace deal. #

Press writer Aamer Madhani in Munich and AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

Will Weissert, Josh Boak And Lindsay Whitehurst, The Associated Press

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Prince Harry at the medal ceremony for alpine skiing at the Invictus Games Vancouver Whistler 2025 in Whistler, Canada on Feb. 11, 2025. Eric Charbonneau/Invictus Games Foundation via Getty



President Donald Trump speaks with reporters as Elon Musk listens in the Oval Office at the White House, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025, in Washington. (Photo/Alex Brandon). Musk is head of DOGE.



Demonstrators take part in a protest in Manila, calling for the impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte. Ezra Acayan/Getty Images. The impeachment complaint against the vice president focused on a death threat she made against the president, his wife and the House speaker last year, irregularities in the use of her office's intelligence funds and her failure to stand up to Chinese aggression in the disputed South China Sea.(AP, Feb. 5, 2025)



Liberal leadership candidate Mark Carney at a campaign stop in Regina on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025. Photo by Kayle Neis/Postmedia - A Leger survey suggests a Carney-led party would boost Liberal support by six points to 37 per cent, putting them in a dead heat with the Tories.



Premier of Québec François Legault speaks to reporters, accompanied by other Council of the Federation members, at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025. Photo by Ben Curtis /AP A new poll suggested that 59 per cent of Quebecers would be in favour of a new Energy East project. (File by National Post)

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